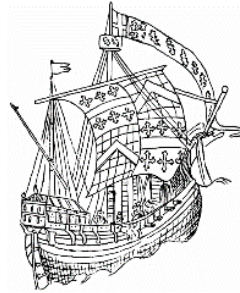


## Other Output A Quality manual and report on evaluation results



Hanse-Parlament

Hamburg, February 2025



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## Project Partner

Hanse-Parlament, Germany (Lead Partner)

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Handwerkskammer Schwerin, Germany

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Latvia

Chamber of Crafts and SME in Katowice, Poland

Hungarian Association of Craftsmen Corporation, Hungary

Informatikai Tavkozlesi Elektronikai Vallalalkozasok Szovetsege Egyesulet, Hungary

## Language

English

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## 1. Introduction

### Summary of the Project

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the construction sector urgently need to overcome the following challenges:

- a) Fast, active and efficient shaping of the digital transformation.
- b) Comprehensive realization of cooperation across different organizations at all stages of the construction process.
- c) Attracting the urgently needed, appropriately qualified next generation of skilled workers and entrepreneurs.

The demand for good apartments and houses has rarely been as high as it is now, and yet there is far too little affordable housing available. Hence, significant increases in efficiency and acceleration of construction planning and execution are much needed in the construction industry. Construction projects can be carried out more efficiently through the application of targeted digital tools. In fact, around 30% of planning capacities can be saved this way. In addition, digital technologies make the identification of risks in the construction possible at an early stage so that they can be avoided.

When building one- and two-family houses, up to 25% of the total construction costs go to coordination work, which can be reduced to a very large extent through self-coordination using digital tools. Since the construction industry is characterized by a highly specialized division of labour, coordination errors can quickly occur, which often result in inferior quality and delays. Furthermore, energy and environmental aspects are often not given enough attention during new constructions and reconstructions. With the help of digital technologies, building owners, architects, engineers and craftsmen can plan together easily, increase the quality and ensure the adherence to deadlines. Moreover, new technologies make it possible to determine the energy costs of a building at an early stage and to eliminate risks or hidden costs. Individual priorities can be placed on technical features or environmental aspects. Although digital technologies and tools are already being tested and used in practice, the overall digitalization in the construction sector is only advancing very slowly. Compared to other countries (e.g. the Netherlands, Denmark or Finland), Germany has a lot of catching up to do. SMEs in the construction and finishing trades, which are very active in the construction of one, two and smaller multi-family houses are particularly hesitant when it comes to using new digital tools and are therefore the focus of the project. The shortage of skilled workers is particularly severe in the construction industry.

The attractiveness for vocational training and construction activities is clearly suffering from the high specialization, physically difficult work, heteronomy, etc. The targeted use of digital technologies can reverse these barriers and lead to decisive increases in attractiveness. Large companies and general contractors in the construction industry often use their own digital systems, which they impose on their SME subcontractors, making them dependent and completely transparent. This leads to the rejection of digitalization in SMEs. There is a lack of SME specific advisory and training programs on digitalization in the construction and finishing trades. Both the owners and the

employees of the SMEs have a high need for information, advice and further training. Support capacities must be expanded, and teachers and consultants of SMEs must be prepared and trained in a targeted manner in order to be able to convey SMEs and their employees the use of digital technologies. The SME-specific training courses should highlight the intersections and interdependencies between the various trades and actors through transparent interfaces, in order to promote the need for cooperation and the use of digital technologies.

### About Quality manual and report on evaluation results

A distinction is made between two types of evaluation and quality assurance.

#### 1. Evaluation of the educational measures

This quality assurance is carried out specifically for each training measure in connection with the development, testing and completion of the respective training programs. A specific concept for quality assurance and evaluation was developed for each training program. The practical testing of the training programs developed in the project took place in various countries to record different national conditions and was carefully evaluated. The individual training courses were revised and finalized on the basis of the evaluation results. The implementation reports and evaluation concepts and results are part of the corresponding outputs:

O2 Train the Trainer Program & capacity building

O3 Digital additional qualifications for the construction and finishing trades

O4 Training program on cooperation through digitalisation

O5 Digital training for the construction and finishing trades

O6 Digital Entrepreneurship Education

The concepts for evaluating the educational measures and the results of quality assurance are presented together with the implementation reports on outputs O2 to O6.

#### 2. Evaluation of the processes

Quality assurance is carried out for project implementation, overall management, transfer and implementation of results. The basis is formed by the objectives, tasks with content, cost and time specifications etc. of the partner agreement, the activity and dissemination plans, which are checked and updated monthly by a PP1 HP employee with many years of experience. If targets are not met, the partners concerned are informed and solutions are developed together. The monitoring results and updates to the plans are coordinated with all partners every six months. Cooperation, communication and the implementation of activities and events are evaluated by PP1 through written and electronic surveys and personal interviews. The results are continuously fed into further work, resulting in a continuous improvement process.

For further evaluations of the cooperation, project management, transfers and implementation consultations, an external office is called in, which is particularly experienced in the implementation of international projects and also carries out surveys of the project partners, transfer recipients and evaluations of implementations.

The following are listed below:

- The objectives and methods of all evaluations of the entire project (see Chapter 2.).
- The quality assurances and evaluations of the training measures planned and carried out in the project (see Chapter 3.), the results of which are presented in Outputs 02 - 06.
- The quality assurances and evaluations of the processes planned and carried out in the project (see Chapter 4.).
- The results of the quality assurance and evaluations of the organisational processes (see Chapter 5).

## 2. Methods and goals of evaluation

Numerous evaluation methods and standards have been established on an international level. The comparison of applied methods shows that concerning the validity evaluation criteria play a significant role (cf. among others Widmer, Th., Evaluation: Ein systematisches Handbuch, Wiesbaden, 2009).

Depending on which criteria certain priority is assigned to, the evaluation results turn out correspondingly.

The same significance has the pragmatic direction. Therefore, the question: which goals have to be reached with the evaluation?

### 2.1 Goals

As a rule, the evaluation has the following goals:

1. It has to provide objectified knowledge about the progress (quantity and quality) of pro-cesses.
2. It serves the control of such processes and helps capturing the strong and the weak points. Therefore, it is an instrument of quality assurance.
3. It serves the legitimization. In other words, a successful evaluation is evidence of competence of the person responsible for the process being evaluated.
4. Transparency, to make a dialogue possible.

In order to achieve these goals, the evaluation was performed in a process-related and summative manner: process-related (also formative, development-related) in order to evaluate the quality of the project progress and if necessary, to make changes. The summative evaluation or evaluation of results serves the evaluation of the specified objectives within the framework of the project, final evaluation of impact and efficiency of the project lecturers management, of cooperation and transfer.

### 2.2 Methods

As a rule, it is reasonable to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative instruments for evaluations: “If one wants to ensure the availability of statements concerning relevant pro-gram conditions and impacts through the framework of mutually reinforcing evidence so the multiple methodical access providers, in general, a more comprehensive and informative picture than a monomethod approach” (Brandtstädter, Jochen (1990): Development during the course of life. Approaches and problems of lifespan development psychology. In: Mayer, Karl Ulrich (Hg.): Life courses and social

transformation (special issue of the Cologne magazine for sociology and social psychology. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.).

Whereas for the analysis of process-related data (program control, execution etc.) first of all qualitative survey methods are suitable, for the verification of achievement of the goals, of impact and causal assessment quantitative survey and evaluation methods have to be implemented (Stockmann, Reinhard: Was ist eine gute Evaluation. Saarbrücken: Centrum für Evaluation, 2002. (CEval-Arbeitspapiere; 9).

Within the framework of evaluations, the most frequently used methods are:

- Secondary analysis of available materials
- Guided interviews
- Standardized surveys or partly standardized surveys
- Case studies

Which methods are selected and implemented in particular depends on the central questions of evaluation discussed herein, therefore which goals and tasks are set, who performs the evaluation and which research paradigm must be the basis for this.

Within the framework of the present evaluation the mixed model – consolidation model – is implemented. According to the general description it means that first of all a quantitative survey/research is performed. The obtained data material is subsequently evaluated quantitatively, then it is followed by qualitative research method which is aimed at the consolidation of achieved results. So, it provides material for the interpretation of expected and unexpected effects and illustrates the results of quantitative studies on the basis of case examples.

Therefore, for the evaluation of the DIG-CON project standardized as well as partly standardized surveys were used in the form of written questionnaires during planned and conducted partner workshops as well as an online survey. Complementary results were achieved after that with the help of guided interviews.

The secondary analysis of available materials was also included in the broadest sense, i. e. for the registration of framework data of the project the control instrument “Activity planning” and “Project application” were evaluated in order to capture project goals, terms and tasks of the project consortium and to take them into account during the implementation of separate evaluation steps and assessments.



### 3. Quality assurance and evaluation of educational measures

In the context of the project, the following educational measures shall be developed, tested, evaluated and implemented:

- ✓ In Work Package 3 Train the Trainer program for the qualification of teachers and
- ✓ counsellors on digital literacy.
- ✓ In Work Package 4 Digital additional qualifications for the construction and finishing trades
- ✓ In Work Package 5 Training program on cooperation through digitalization
- ✓ In Work Package 5 Digital training for the construction and finishing trades
- ✓ In Work Package 6 Digital entrepreneurship education

Quality assurance for all professional educational measures shall follow EQAVET.

Target groups and beneficiaries are SMEs, their owners, managers and specialists, youth and students. In order to completely understand their true requirements, representatives from SMEs as well as other target groups shall be engaged intensively. SMEs shall be included in technical discussions and practical testing as well as take part in workshops from the very beginning.

In order to cover differing national requirements, the educational measures developed as part of the project shall be tested in different countries through trials and evaluated scientifically using written participation surveys, interviews with participants, teachers and SMEs as well as accompanying observations.

Indicators include number of participants, distribution across industries, position in the company; satisfaction levels of the participants with lecturers, organization, documents, etc.; assessments of the lecturers; evaluations of SMEs regarding practical relevance; results of examinations and project work.

#### 3.1 Train the Trainer Program

Partner 4 Satakunta University shall develop the concept, curriculum and all instructional materials for a Train the Trainer Program for the qualification of teachers, consultants and university lecturers for the implementation of further education as well as consulting SMEs by 30 April 2023.

A practical test of the Train the Trainer Program shall occur on 13 and 14 September 2023 in Budapest with at least 15 participants from 4 countries, namely the advisor and teaching staff of all project partners. An implementation report shall be created by 31 September 2023.

Partner 4 Satakunta University shall develop an evaluation concept including surveys, in-person interviews and accompanying observation and will conduct the evaluation of the trial by 30 September 2023.

The revision and finalization of the educational product as well as the development of instructions for use for the future shall be completed on the basis of the evaluation results by 31 December 2023.

### 3.2 Provision of additional digital Qualification

The following main activities will be carried out in work package 4 “Additional digital qualifications”.

- a) Development of a concept as well as curriculum, teaching materials and examination regulations for digital additional qualification programs for young people with strong learning skills that can be completed during or after the vocational training.
- b) Testing, evaluation and completion of the "Digital Additional Qualifications" program.
- c) Transfer to 50 chambers and other educational institutions from 13 countries.

Partner 4 Satakunta University will develop by 31/03/2023 concept and draft curricula and teaching materials for a comprehensive modalized training programme for the provision of additional digital qualification in the construction and finishing trades.

The training programme will be tested in real-life operation with at least 40 young people who are in vocational training or have just completed their initial vocational training, under different national conditions: In Latvia by Partner 5 Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in Poland by Partner 6 Chamber of Crafts and SME in Katowice and in Hungary by Partner 7 Ipartestületek Országos Szövetsége. The three partners will submit implementation reports by 30 April 2024.

The trials will be evaluated. To this end, partner 4 Satakunta University will develop an evaluation concept by 30 November 2022, carry out the evaluation and prepare an evaluation report by 31 May 2024.

Based on the evaluation results, Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament will take over revision and completion of the results with

- a) concept, curricula, teaching materials and officially examination regulations
- b) Application notes and recommendations for use

After completion transfer and use result by PP3 HWKS, PP5 LCCI. PP6 CCSK and PP7 IPOSZ as well as to 50 chambers with their educational institutions and other VET providers.

### 3.3 Two further vocational training courses

The project aims to promote work-based learning. Based on the KAIN Method two SME-specific training programs are to be developed, tested, evaluated and completed:

- Cooperations by means of digitalization.
- Digital training for the construction and finishing trades.

The individual training courses shall be oriented specifically for the needs of the "owner and management of SMEs" and "specialists of SMEs" target groups. The learning results are found under EQF Level 5.

The curricula and teaching materials developed shall be tested and evaluated in different countries. In doing so, the development and finalization work shall take into account differing national requirements so that use in different countries is strongly encouraged.

#### Further training program "Cooperation through digitalisation"

Partner 4 Satakunta University Partner 2 Hochschule 21 shall develop the concept, curriculum and all teaching material until 30 April 2023.

A practical test of the training program must take place in the period from April 2023 to February 2024 in Latvia by Partner 5 Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in Poland by Partner 6 Chamber of Crafts and SME in Katowice and in Hungary by Partner 7 Ipartestületek Országos Szövetsége. Implementation reports should be prepared by 28 February 2024 at the latest.

Partner 2 Hochschule 21 shall develop an evaluation concept including surveys, in-person interviews and accompanying observation and will conduct the evaluation of the trial by 31 March 2024.

The revision and finalization of the educational product as well as the development of instructions for use for the future shall be completed on the basis of the evaluation results through Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament.

#### Further training program "Digital training for the construction and finishing trades"

Partner 2 Hochschule 21 together with Partner 4 Satakunta University shall develop the concept, curriculum and all teaching material until 31 May 2023.

A practical test of the training program must take place in the period from May 2023 to February 2024 in Poland by Partner 6 Chamber of Crafts and SME in Katowice and in Hungary by Partner 7 Ipartestületek Országos Szövetsége. The implementation report should be prepared by 29 February 2024 at the latest.

Partner Partner 2 Hochschule 21 shall develop an evaluation concept including surveys, in-person interviews and accompanying observation and will conduct the evaluation of the trial by 31 March 2024.

The revision and finalization of the educational product as well as the development of instructions for use for the future shall be completed on the basis of the evaluation results through Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament by 30 April 2024.

### 3.4 Digital entrepreneurship education

The following main activities will be carried out in work package 6 “Digital entrepreneurship education”.

- a) Development of concepts, curricula and teaching materials for modules of digital entrepreneurship education that will be integrated into existing master craftsman and construction technician training and bachelor degree programs.
- b) Testing, evaluation and completion of the module program.
- c) Transfer to 50 chambers and other educational institutions as well as to 20 colleges/universities from 13 countries.

The target groups of the training are owners and managers in SMEs as well as people who are on their way to taking on such functions in the future.

The learning results are found under EQF Level 5 and 6.

Partner 2 Hochschule 21 together with Partner 8 Informatikai Tavkozlesi Elektronikai Vallalalkozasok Szovetsege Egyesulet shall develop the concept, curricula and teaching materials until 31 May 2023.

A practical test of main modules take place in the period from May 2023 to November 2024 in Germany by partner 2 Hochschule 21 and partner 3 Handwerkskammer Schwerin, in Latvia by Partner 5 Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in Poland by Partner 6 Chamber of Crafts and SME in Katowice and in Hungary by Partner 7 Ipartestuletek Országos Szövetsége. The implementation reports should be prepared by 30 November 2024 at the latest.

Partner 23 Hochschule 21 shall develop an evaluation concept including surveys, in-person interviews and accompanying observation and will conduct the evaluation of the trial by 30 November 2024.

The revision and finalization of the educational product as well as the development of instructions for use for the future shall be completed on the basis of the evaluation results through partner 1 Hanse-Parlament by 31 January 2025.

### 3.5 Implementation of innovation funding

The training programs (see section 3.3) are carried out using the KAIN method, which involves longer phases of on-the-job learning with accompanying coaching. These phases are to be combined with the promotion of innovation and the realization of digital development projects in the participating SMEs.

To this end, Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament shall develop the KAIN method by 28 February 2023 at the latest with a coaching program for learning in practice and for the realization of building of construction cooperations by means of digital technologies. On this basis, the partners who carry out the trials of the further training courses will, with



Efficient construction through digital technologies in the construction and finishing trade (DIG-CON)



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the support of the universities, promote innovation in the participating companies and support and advise the implementation of specific development projects by the participants in the further training programs.

## 4. Quality assurance and evaluation of processes

Planning includes two areas of project implementation:

1. Processes of project implementation (see 4.2)  
Quality assurance and evaluation of project management, partner meetings and further tasks in the context of Work Package 1 "Project Management".
2. Processes of Transfer and Implementation (see 4.3)  
Quality assurance and evaluation of written and personnel transfer, individual implementation counselling as well as additional measures for distributing the project results in the Work Package 7 "Dissemination and Implementation".

As the planning and control mechanisms as well as the data collection and evaluation are identical for both two areas, the relevant planning that follows shall be the same for all.

Concerning the evaluation criteria which must be used in relation to the evaluated processes the opinions in the scientific literature diverge strongly. Often it is recommended to use checklists which contain up to 100 and more criteria according to which the processes can be evaluated.

To ensure the practicability of the evaluation but nevertheless to assess the results thoroughly the evaluation of the project implementation concentrated on four criteria.

1. The quality and the efficiency of management.
2. The communication and the cooperation in the project consortium and with the associated partners.
3. The involvement of transfer recipients and success of transfer activities.
4. The expected benefits of implementation of products developed within the framework of the project.

According to international experiences with evaluations which are available first of all in the English-speaking countries a holistic (integral) evaluation of processes should have the priority.

During the evaluation of the registered data the focus was on the following criteria:

- a) How do project partners assess the cooperation in consortium and the project management of the Lead Partner?
- b) Have the expectations of the project partners been met?
- c) Did the management meet the requirements?
- d) How do transfer recipients assess their involvement and the transfer activities?
- e) What benefits do the developed products have for the project partners and the transfer recipients?

### 4.1 Planning and control mechanisms

The project uses four central planning and control mechanisms:

1. A binding agreement with

- foundations of implementation
- responsibilities and consequences of non-compliance
- detailed description of goals, activities and envisaged results
- tasks, obligations and budgets for each partner
- binding rules of management and accounting statements
- uniform paperwork for work reports, registration of working times etc.

The agreement shall be developed by the Lead Partner at a workshop with input and votes from all partners and agreement from the Lead Partner and each individual projected partner by 31 January 2023.

2. A differentiated activity plan which sets out individual work steps, tasks, events, etc., until the end of the project
  - responsible and contributing partners
  - deadlines for implementation and execution
  - goals and expected results
  - all tests and implementation
  - quantity structures and quality criteria

This plan shall be created by the Lead Partner at a workshop along with all partners, who advise, vote on and adhere to a binding agreement. Therein after, the activity plan from the Lead Partner shall be monitored, updated and discussed at bi-annual workshops with all partners.

3. On the basis of a uniform foundation, each partner shall vote on a communication and dissemination plan from the Lead Partner with target groups, deadlines, indicators, obligations, dissemination measures etc.

An initial plan shall be created by all partners by 30 September 2022.

An record of all measures implemented and an update to the plan shall be created by all partners by 31 January 2024.

The final record of all measures implemented shall be created by all partners by 31 March 2025.

The communication and dissemination plan shall also be discussed at bi-annual workshops.

4. The Lead Partner shall develop a separate project accounting plan with sub-budgets for each partner and financial specifications for tasks undertaken. For this purpose, money for the expenses shall be reserved. The partners shall only receive payment when the agreed upon task has been completed and all receipts have been submitted.

The activity and dissemination plan as well as accounting are the central control and monitoring instruments with regards to achieving project goals, implementation of all activities, compliance with all deadlines, cost-effective implementation and financial development. Monitoring and accounting shall be run by an experienced employee of the Lead Partner, who is responsible for compliance with all requirements, assessments of invitations for tenders, cost efficiency, etc. In addition, the Lead Partner shall create an external tax consultancy office for monitoring and evaluation, which is also



responsible for compliance with all requirements, fiscal accounts and cost efficiency. Planning and monitoring results shall be consulted at meetings where all partners are present. Large savings, greater cost efficiency, faithfulness to goals and deadlines and attaining greater quality shall be ensured with this approach.

## 4.2 Project Management

Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament shall be responsible for overall project management, which includes:

- Creation, coordination and completion of a partner agreement
- Creation and coordination of a differentiated activity plan for the entirety of the project period
- Development and coordination of a communication and dissemination program with each partner
- Creation and continual implementation of separate project accounting
- Bi-annual activity report and statements with all receipts from all partners
- Continual administrative and financial project management
- Creation and publication of newsletters

Securing of communication and intensive bilateral exchange between the Lead Partner and project and associated partners

- Preparation, management and follow-up of at least five online meetings and four workshops with all project partners.
- Preparation, management and follow-up of two international counselling and transfer conferences.
- Creation of mid- and final reports with project accounting.

In addition to the data, results, etc. that result from the central planning and control mechanisms (see 4.1), the following sources of data shall also be used for the evaluation of project management:

- Written evaluation of each partner workshop
- Reoccurring, anonymous electronic survey of project and associated partners
- Comprehensive personal interviews with project and associated partners using external experts

The results of the evaluation shall be reviewed with all partners through workshops and used in additional projects, resulting in a continuous improvement process. A comprehensive project management evaluation report shall be created by Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament.



### 4.3 Transfer, implementation and dissemination

1. Development and agreement of a communication and dissemination plan individually for each partner with separate activities including transfer, counselling and further dissemination, target groups, deadlines, etc. (see 4.1)
2. Preparation of concepts, curricula, teaching materials and instructions for use for all educational and other measures developed as part of the program as well as paper and electronic transfers for all direct and associated project partners from 13 countries as well as additional education institutions and stakeholders.
  - Responsible: Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament
3. Individual implementation consulting for project and associated project partners from 13 countries as well as additional education institutions
  - Responsible: Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament
4. Implementation of measures for further dissemination
  - Responsible: Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament with the involvement of all other partners
  - Complete results, materials, etc., shall be made available in an Internet platforms accessible to the public as well as on the websites of the project partners
  - The project results and its uses shall be reported intensively in at least three press conferences and at least six press releases.
  - Ongoing information for all project and associated partners on their own platforms and in member journals
  - Project and associated partners introduce the results of the project into the political decision-making processes of their daily business with special support of work-based learning
  - The project results, possibilities of use, etc. shall be presented in person to at least 18 third-party institutions, including universities and business forums, in different countries
  - Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament is an international organization in numerous political committees and shall inform them about project goals and results, in order to further promote their inclusion in political decision-making processes.
  - In addition, eight result videos are to be created by 30 September 2025:
    - a) PP1 HP Video A "Overview Project"
    - b) PP2 HS21 Video B "Curricula & Test Result 06"
    - c) PP3 HWKS Video C "Craft Lap"
    - d) PP4 SAMK Video D "Curricula & Test Result 02"
    - e) PP5 LCCI Video E "Curricula & Test Result 03"
    - f) PP6 CCK Video F "Test Result 04& 06"
    - g) PP7 IPOSZ Video G "Curricula & Test Result 05 and online SME consulting"
    - h) PP8 IVSZ Video H "Result 01"

- Two international consultation and transfer conference will also be held online in January and February 2025.

In addition to the data, results, etc. that result from the central planning and control mechanisms (see 4.1), the following sources of data shall also be used for the evaluation of transfer, implementation and deployment:

- Reoccurring, anonymous electronic survey of project and associated partners
- Comprehensive personal interviews with project and associated partners using external experts

The results of the evaluation shall be reviewed with all partners through workshops and used in additional projects, resulting in a continuous improvement process. A comprehensive transfer, implementation and deployment evaluation report shall be created by Partner 1 Hanse-Parlament.

## 5. Results of quality assurance and evaluations

### 5.1 Methods and goals of evaluation

Numerous evaluation methods and standards have been established on an international level. The comparison of applied methods shows that concerning the validity evaluation criteria play a significant role (cf. among others Widmer, Th., Evaluation: Ein systematisches Handbuch, Wiesbaden, 2009).

Depending on which criteria certain priority is assigned to, the evaluation results turn out correspondingly.

The same significance has pragmatic direction. Therefore, the question: which goals have to be reached with the evaluation?

#### 5.11 Goals

As a rule, the evaluation has the following goals:

1. It has to provide objective knowledge about the progress (quantity and quality) of processes.
2. It serves to control such processes and helps to capture the strong and the weak points. Therefore, it is an instrument of quality assurance.
3. It serves legitimization. In other words, a successful evaluation is evidence of the competence of the person responsible for the process being evaluated.
4. Transparency, in order to make a dialogue possible.

In order to achieve these goals, the evaluation was performed in a process-related and summative manner: process-related (also formative, development-related) in order to evaluate the quality of the project progress and if necessary, to make changes. The summative evaluation or evaluation of results serves the evaluation of the specified objectives within the framework of the project, final evaluation of impact and efficiency of the project lecturers management, of cooperation and transfer.

#### 5.12 Methods

Ordinarily, it is reasonable to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative instruments for evaluations: "If one wants to ensure the availability of statements concerning relevant program conditions and impacts through the framework of mutually reinforcing evidence so the multiple methodic access providers, in general, a more comprehensive and informative picture than a mono methodic approach" (Brandtstädter, Jochen (1990): Development during the course of life. Approaches and problems of lifespan development psychology. In: Mayer, Karl Ulrich (Hg.): Life courses and social transformation (special issue of the Cologne magazine for sociology and social psychology. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.).

Whereas for the analysis of process-related data (program control, execution etc.) first of all qualitative survey methods are suitable, for the verification of achievement of the goals, of impact and causal assessment quantitative survey and evaluation methods

have to be implemented (Stockmann, Reinhard: Was ist eine gute Evaluation. Saarbrücken: Centrum für Evaluation, 2002. (CEval-Arbeitspapiere; 9).

Within the framework of evaluations, the most frequently used methods are:

- Secondary analysis of available materials
- Guided interviews
- Standardized surveys or partly standardized surveys
- Case studies

Which methods are selected and implemented in particular depends on the central questions of evaluation discussed herein, therefore which goals and tasks are set, who performs the evaluation and which research paradigm must be the basis for this?

Within the framework of the present evaluation the mixed model – consolidation model – is implemented. According to the general description it means that first of all quantitative survey/research is performed. The obtained data material is subsequently evaluated quantitatively, then it is followed by qualitative research method which is aimed at the consolidation of achieved results. So, it provides material for the interpretation of expected and unexpected effects and illustrates the results of quantitative studies on the basis of case examples.

Therefore, for the evaluation of the KA4HR project standardized as well as partly standardized surveys were used in the form of written questionnaires during planned and conducted partner workshops as well as an online survey. Complementary results were achieved after that with the help of guided interviews.

The secondary analysis of available materials was also included in the broadest sense, i. e. for the registration of framework data of the project the control instrument “Activity planning” and “Project application” were evaluated in order to capture project goals, terms and tasks of the project consortium and to take them into account during the implementation of separate evaluation steps and assessments.

## 5.2 Evaluation in the DIG-CON project

In the DIG-CON project, the evaluation has two purposes: to assess the developed and/or tested measures and to evaluate the implementation of the project, as described in the following.

### 5.21 Evaluation of the developed educational measures and other results

The quality assurance for all the educational measures was performed according to EQAVET. All the training was implemented according to the work-based learning principles.

The target groups of the educational measures were owners, managers and professionals of SMEs and students as well as lecturers and consultants who conduct the qualification programs.

To fully meet the requirements of the target groups right from the start, they were involved in the development of educational measures through expert discussions, practical tests and participation in workshops. In addition, Baltic Sea Academy and its

members (24 universities from 9 countries) and Hanse Parliament and its members (50 chambers of crafts, industry and commerce from 13 countries) as well as SMEs shared experiences, came up with up-to-date topics and regional conditions.

In order to take into account different regional/national conditions, the educational measures were tested in different countries and evaluated by using written surveys of participants, interviews with participants, lecturers and SMEs as well as by accompanying observations. The evaluation of the training measures which took place during the entire implementation process, from preparation to evaluation phase, was carried out:

- Train the Trainer program by the Partner 04 Satakunta University.
- Further vocational training programs by the Partners 02 Hochschule 21 and 04 Satakunta University.

To point out, the evaluation of educational measures developed during this project is not the subject of the present report but the evaluation of the project implementation, management by the lead partner, cooperation in consortium as well as with transfer recipients. Concepts and results of the evaluation and quality assurance of all educational measures are presented in the respective educational measures, see:

- Output 02 Train the Trainer Program & capacity building
- Output 03 Digital additional qualifications for the construction and finishing trades
- Output 04 Training programme on cooperation through digitalisation
- Output 05 Digital training for the construction and finishing trades
- Output 06 Digital entrepreneurship education

The outputs are published on the project website <https://dig-con.eu> and can be viewed there and downloaded free of charge.

## 5.22 Evaluation of the management, cooperation and transfer

The project works with a strong centralized management. The goals, content related tasks, cost requirements and schedule were agreed in detail with each partner and set in an action plan, communication and dissemination plan, which are constantly monitored and updated by the lead partner's project team with many years of experience. The action and dissemination plan as well as the billing were transparent for all partners and were regularly discussed in workshops.

The lead partner monitored the project process monthly. In case of divergence from the targets or deadlines the corresponding partners were immediately informed, and solutions worked out together. The results of the control and any necessary updates to the planning were discussed and agreed with all partners every six months.

For further evaluation tasks of the project implementation including transfer activities, an external office was engaged, that as a neutral institution also carried out surveys of the project participants and transfer recipients.

## 5.3 Evaluation results of the management, cooperation and transfer

### 5.31 Data sources

For the evaluation of the project implementation the following data sources were used:

1. Project application of the lead partner
2. Activity Plan
3. Written surveys of participants of every workshop and events
4. Evaluation of the skills alliance
5. Online survey of all project partners
6. Detailed interviews with all project partners as well as separate transfer recipients (sample)
7. Intellectual outputs developed during the project

Interim results of the evaluation were continuously included in the implementation of further work, so that a continuous process of learning and improvement was achieved during the project implementation. The overall results are listed below.

### 5.32 Evaluation criteria

Concerning the evaluation criteria which must be used in relation to the evaluated processes, the opinions in scientific literature diverge strongly. Often it is recommended to use checklists which contain up to 100 and more criteria according to which the processes can be evaluated.

To ensure the practicability of the evaluation but nevertheless to assess the results thoroughly the evaluation of the project implementation concentrated on four criteria.

1. The quality and the efficiency of management
2. Communication and cooperation in the project consortium
3. The involvement of transfer recipients and transfer activities
4. The expected benefits of products developed within the framework of the project

According to international experiences with evaluation which are available first of all in the English-speaking countries a holistic (integral) evaluation of processes should have the priority.

During the evaluation of the registered data the focus was on the following criteria:

- How do project partners assess the cooperation in consortium and the project management of the lead partner?
- Have the expectations of the project partners been met?
- Did the management meet the requirements?
- How do transfer recipients assess their involvement and the transfer activities?

- What benefits do the developed products have for the project partners and the transfer recipients?

### 5.33 Evaluation results of the Transnational Project Partner Meetings

A standardized survey was conducted during the transnational project partner meetings. As a survey instrument, a questionnaire was created with statements that can be accepted or rejected by the respondents with a higher or lower consent according to the given multi-level response scale. This method made it possible to form the first impression, a sketch, a tendency to satisfaction and the opinions of the respondents. The individual answers were later discussed in detail in individual interviews.

Four workshops with the personal presence of all project partners and experts were planned and realized:

- on 01. – 02.06.2022 in Hamburg, Germany
- on 23. – 24.11.2022 in Katowice, Poland
- on 15. – 16.06.2023 in Budapest, Hungary
- on 04. – 05.09.2024 in Riga, Latvia

Online meeting with all partners was held on:

- 11 March 2022
- 31 March 2023
- 07 November 2023
- 03 June 2024
- 03 February 2025

Accordingly, an evaluation of the four project meetings took place.

The workshops usually lasted  $\frac{3}{4}$  or the full day and were always accompanied by an additional joint evening event to promote communication and exchange of experience. The dates for all workshops were set before the start of the project in consultation with all partners.

The lead partner invited all partners to the workshops six weeks in advance in writing with a detailed agenda and sent out prepared project materials to be discussed together. Moreover, the lead partner prepared a detailed presentation for each workshop, which was then sent to all partners together with the workshop minutes after the meeting.

In addition to the workshops with all partners also workshops with 2 – 3 partners were organized, where individual questions to implementations were discussed.

The written evaluation of the workshop included 20 topics related to the preparation and the conduct of the workshop, the communication in consortium and the management of the lead partner. For each topic the participants could choose between five answer categories

- strongly agree
- agree
- neither agree nor disagree
- disagree



- strongly disagree

Participants also had the opportunity to make suggestions for cooperation within the consortium, the implementation of the project and the organization of the workshop. However, this possibility was rarely used.

Below, an example of a written workshop feedback form is attached. The workshop feedback forms were identical for all workshops to record possible changes on the statements during the project lifetime.

### WORKSHOP FEEDBACK FORM OF THE PROJECT “DIG-CON”

***Please indicate by ticking the scale that applies to your opinion on the following aspects of the project workshop.***

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Lead Partner (LP) sent the information on the workshop in due time					
The information on the workshop: agenda, venue, hotel, etc. is satisfactory					
All project partners were involved in planning the workshop, e. g. setting the date, time, etc.					
The communication with the LP is reliable and supportive					
In general, communication with each other (between the partners) is smoothly					
The topics on the agenda were transparent					
There was devoted enough time for every topic					
All partners were involved in making decisions and action during the workshop					



Everyone who has wished, got a chance to speak, discuss, share own opinion					
The planned total time for the workshop was satisfactory					
In the framework of the workshop was enough time planned to communicate with each other					
All in all, the working atmosphere was good during the workshop					
The premises, lighting, technique, etc. of the workshop were satisfactory					
The time management like punctuality, effectiveness, etc. of the workshop is good					
After the workshop I am well informed about the common further steps in the project (appointments, meetings, etc.)					
After the workshop I know very well what my individual tasks in the future are					
All questions I had before the workshop were clarified during the workshop					
Carrying out the workshop together with other events for reasons of time and cost saving and experience exchange with others from different countries is particularly positive aspect					
The organisation of hotel, joint lunch/dinner and catering is good					
It is good to receive information about other projects, acquisitions and funding					

possibilities during the workshop					
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*Do you have any suggestions to improve and strengthen cooperation in the consortium, project implementation, and organization of the project workshops?*

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*Thank you!*

Almost 90 % of all participants strongly agree with all topics of the survey and 10 % agree.

The participants rated the following statements as particularly positive, a large proportion of whom were rated as "strongly agree":

- Timely and comprehensive information by the lead partner
- Involvement of all the partners in discussions, consultations and during decision-making
- Very good working atmosphere
- Good communication with the lead partner and other partners
- Satisfactory spatial and technical conditions
- Good organization and conduct
- Very good information about other current projects and planned new projects

The following statements were largely valued with "consent":

- All project partners were involved in planning the workshop
- The planned total time for the workshop was satisfactory
- All questions I had before the workshop were clarified during the workshop

Over the course of time, the evaluation results have changed only slightly. The management, organization and implementation of the project, information, and communication as well as the execution of workshops are evaluated very positively and show only marginal starting points for improvements.

#	RESPONSES
1	The time together and to get to know each other of other Partners was very constructive and motivating
2	Thank you!
3	Thank you for the hospitality and well organized partner meeting!

### 5.34 Online survey of project partners

In this case, it is a partially standardized online survey. The online questionnaire is a newer, more modern method than paper, telephone or face-to-face surveys. The positive aspect of this form of written questionnaire is that it is quick and easy to implement,

e.g., respondents can decide for themselves when to complete the questionnaire and there is no time pressure to answer questions. With online surveys, time and costs are saved and immediate availability of data is possible. For example, the free internet tool Survey Monkey, in which the questionnaire was completed, automatically summarizes the answers to each question and displays them graphically.

The written online survey contains 26 questions on project implementation and the use and dissemination of the results.

1. In your opinion, do the tasks developed and implemented so far follow the project's objectives?  
All persons determine it matches with the project objectives.
2. Taking into consideration the tasks performed so far, please indicate your expectations in regard to meeting the project's deadlines?  
Only three people stated that the deadlines were met in full, six assumed slight delays and one person stated that the deadlines were not met.
3. What were the biggest challenges for you when implementing the project?  
In each case, 18% stated 'no challenges at all', time schedule for tasks', 'delays' and 'problems with individual tasks'. A partner states: *Finding the right instructors and experts is a serious task. Wages in the sector have almost doubled in the recent period, which also makes it difficult to employ suitable instructors. Most of the training courses take place online and require certain digital skills. It is a serious challenge to ensure that participants of the same level of knowledge enter the training courses.*
4. In your opinion, is the implementation of the DIG-CON project an asset to both - beneficiaries of the project (for example SMEs, chambers) and project partners as it allows for the improvement/development of new skills and knowledge?  
The most partners completely satisfied this question; answered „A great deal“ or “A lot”.
5. The international composition of the partnership is an enrichment for the whole project approach.  
Most of all persons responded strongly agree, two persons agree.
6. How do you benefit from the international cooperation within the project?
  - International cooperation is highly appreciated by most partners, the transnational project approach is described as without alternative.
  - New contacts, new experiences, projects results are useful. It is very important experience for the countries, in which the project has been implemented.
7. The partners were asked to rate the individual outputs of the project in terms of various criteria. This led to the following conclusions.

### Output 1: Best Practices Digital Technologies and Trainings- how do you evaluate the following criteria?

	BAD	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Quality of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	50.00% 5	40.00% 4	0.00% 0	10	4.30
Suitability to the target group	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40.00% 4	30.00% 3	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	3.90
Translation of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40.00% 4	20.00% 2	40.00% 4	10	5.00
Upscaling potential	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	30.00% 3	50.00% 5	0.00% 0	10	4.30
Overall assessment	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	40.00% 4	50.00% 5	0.00% 0	10	4.40

### Output 2: Train the Trainer Program - how do you evaluate the following criteria?

	BAD	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Quality of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	60.00% 6	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	4.20
Suitability to the target group	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	50.00% 5	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	4.10
Translation of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 5	10.00% 1	40.00% 4	10	4.90
Upscaling potential	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	60.00% 6	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10	4.00
Overall assessment	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	50.00% 5	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	4.10

### Output 3: Digital additional qualifications for the construction and finishing trades - how do you evaluate the following criteria?

	BAD	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Quality of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	80.00% 8	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10	4.20
Suitability to the target group	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	60.00% 6	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	4.20
Translation of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	40.00% 4	20.00% 2	40.00% 4	10	5.00
Upscaling potential	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	60.00% 6	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	4.20
Overall assessment	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	70.00% 7	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	4.30

### Output 4: Training programme on cooperation through digitalisation - how do you evaluate the following criteria?

	BAD	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Quality of the contents	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	70.00% 7	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	4.30
Translation of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	70.00% 7	20.00% 2	10.00% 1	10	4.40
Suitability to the target group	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	40.00% 4	30.00% 3	10.00% 1	10	4.30
Upscaling potential	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	60.00% 6	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10	4.00
Overall assessment	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	70.00% 7	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	4.30

Output 5: Digital training for the construction and finishing trades - how do you evaluate the following criteria?

	BAD	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Quality of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	70.00% 7	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10	4.10
Suitability to the target group	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	50.00% 5	30.00% 3	0.00% 0	10	4.10
Translation of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	50.00% 5	10.00% 1	30.00% 3	10	4.60
Upscaling potential	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	60.00% 6	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10	4.00
Overall assessment	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	70.00% 7	20.00% 2	0.00% 0	10	4.10

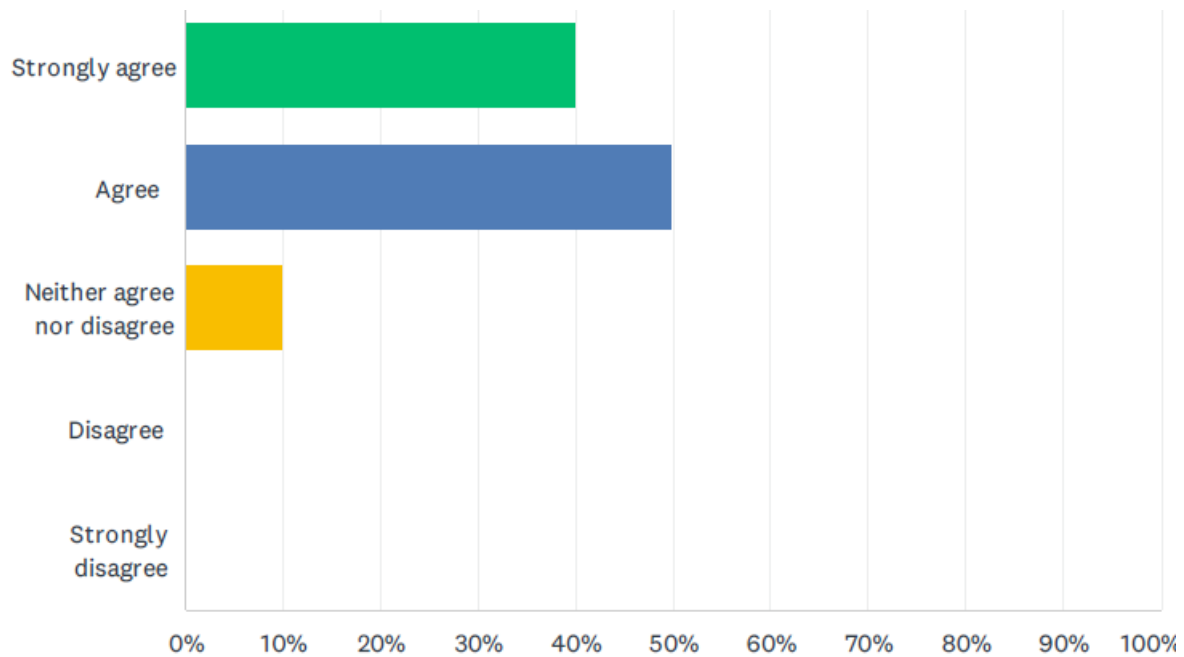
Output 6: Digital entrepreneurship education - how do you evaluate the following criteria?

	BAD	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	NOT APPLICABLE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Quality of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	70.00% 7	20.00% 2	10.00% 1	10	4.40
Suitability to the target group	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	40.00% 4	20.00% 2	20.00% 2	10	4.40
Translation of the content	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	50.00% 5	0.00% 0	50.00% 5	10	5.00
Upscaling potential	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	10.00% 1	70.00% 7	10.00% 1	10.00% 1	10	4.20
Overall assessment	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	70.00% 7	20.00% 2	10.00% 1	10	4.40

8. In your opinion, can the developed project products be used successfully by you and other interested parties after the project ends?

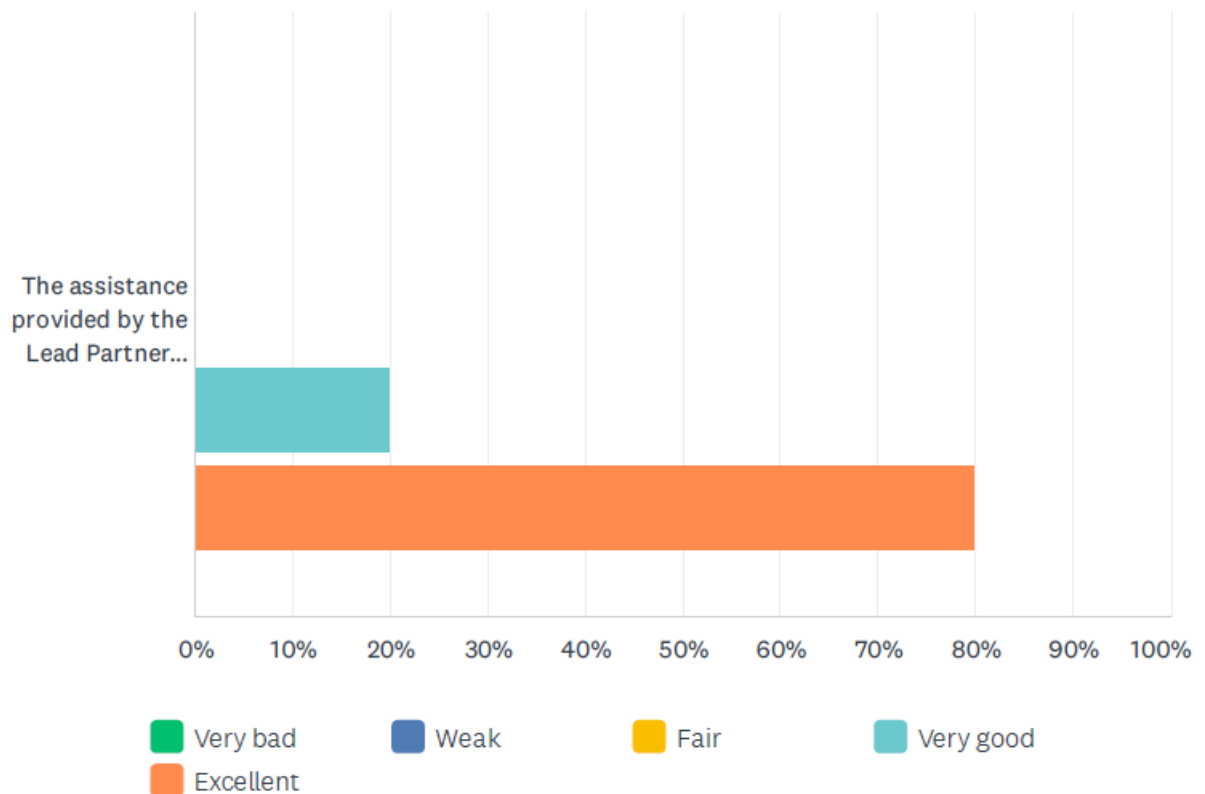
With the exception of one person, all are convinced that the developed project products will be used successfully after the end of the project.

All partners state that they have received all necessary support within the framework of the project so that they/their organisation can use the project results independently.

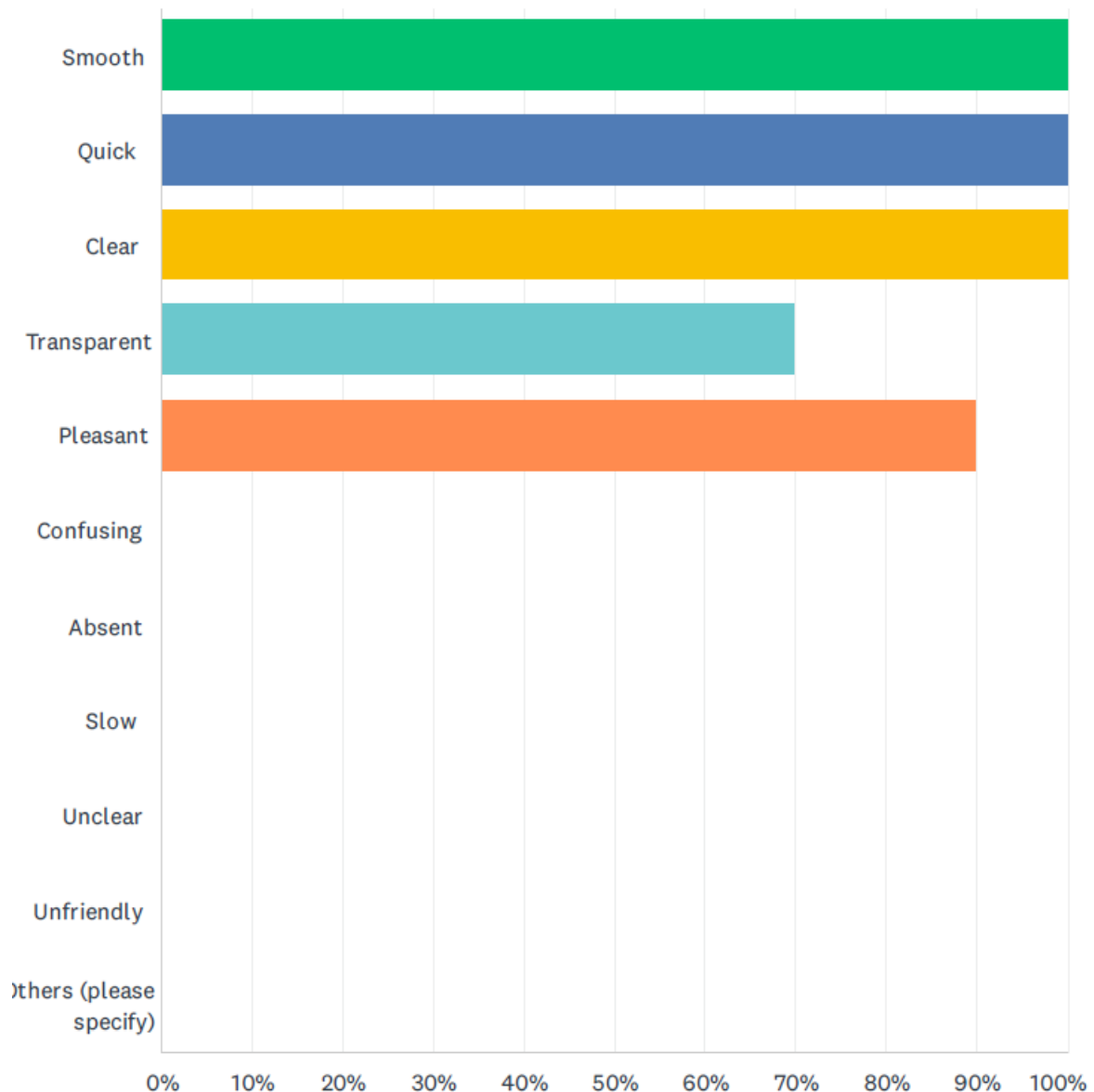


9. All partners rate the management tools developed by the lead partner (activity plan, dissemination plans and project accounting) as very important and extremely effective.

10. How do you assess the assistance and support by the Lead Partner?



11. How do you rate the communication with the Lead Partner? (Multiple answers possible)



The communication between the project partners is rated similarly positively.

12. The partners see no or only very few bureaucratic hurdles in the realisation of the project. The reporting and accounting system in the project is also described as simple.

*Thank you for your support, patience, and managing this project, as well as always answering questions.*

The evaluation of the project implementation and results by the project partners is very positive overall. Only a few suggestions for improvement were made, which are listed in chapter 5.37 Summary of evaluation results and recommendations.

### 5.35 Interviews with project partners<sup>1</sup>

The interview related to key questions is also called a guideline-based interview that means, a set of questions is prespecified by the interviewer before the interview. However, this set of questions should give a guideline through the interview and not kind a strict order, so the interview is more of a fluent, relaxed conversation by freely and openly answering questions. This method makes it possible to act less strictly than with other survey methods, so he / she conducts the interview considering the conversation flow, the set key questions or certain topics not considering the sequence of the questions, for example, or omitting some questions at all.

From November 2024 to January 2025 an external expert conducted interviews with the DIG-CON project partners. These interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes each. The interviews followed a generic set of questions but allowed also for free conversation to hear the opinions of the partners. The interviews focused on the following topics:

- The quality and usefulness of the project outputs
- The involvement of and communication among the project partners
- The design and implementation of the project workshops
- The dissemination of project results
- The administration processes of the project.

#### 1. Was the project important for you? Why did you take part in it?

The project plays an important role for the construction and finishing trade by promoting digitalisation and strengthening collaboration within the company and between different trades. It is aimed in particular at smaller companies that are facing major challenges with the introduction of digital processes. The participation of the partners was motivated by their roles as multipliers, representatives of SME organisations and universities, and the project is well integrated into existing activities such as bachelor's degree courses and research projects on digital construction. The aim is to use digital tools to improve cooperation and promote training and further education for tradespeople and students.

*“Overall, I think the project is very important for the entire construction, craft and manufacturing ecosystem.”*

*“the project was important for our skilled trades organisation, as many of our member companies come from the finishing trades such as electrical, wood and paint. Digitalisation is a challenge for the skilled trades in particular, as many businesses are small and traditionally run.”*

*“We are a Hungarian SME organisation that represents around 30,000 small and medium-sized enterprises - mainly micro-enterprises in the construction and interior design sectors. The project provided an excellent opportunity for further training and awareness-raising.”*

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<sup>1</sup> Done by Artur Malikov, Hamburg



*“We took part because the topic is very topical and fits in well with our other activities.”*

*“Taking part in the project was important for me and especially for the university, as we also deal with the topic of digitalisation in the construction industry. The topic of education and training has been an integral part of our research projects for many years.”*

## **2. In the project, various results were developed. How do you assess these?**

### **a) Result: O1 Best Practices in Digital Technologies and Training**

The project is considered extremely valuable. The results focused on collecting and disseminating the best practices in digitalisation and training within the construction and manufacturing industries. All information has been published in a free handbook. International contributions enriched the project with innovative approaches, while a comparison of training systems showed that Germany is structured but unique in a European context, with other countries facing different challenges in digitalisation and training.

*“We have collected best practices in two areas: digitalisation and training in the construction and finishing trades. From this, we have created a very comprehensive handbook, which is available for free download.”*

*“The result is very helpful, and some content has been implemented internally and introduced to businesses.”*

*“Yes, let’s call it a book – a valuable work full of new insights. Thanks to contributions from international partners, we were able to learn about innovative technologies and approaches from Finland and Poland.”*

*“The results were very interesting and diverse. Some were very simple, while others were highly advanced, such as Building Information Modelling (BIM).”*

*“This outcome is particularly useful in gaining an overview of the situation in other countries. In Germany, practical partners already provide good insights, but in other countries, it became evident that they are still significantly behind in terms of training and digitalisation.”*

### **b) Result: O2 Train the Trainer Programme**

The 'Train the Trainer' programme is highlighted as a central component of the project, as it trained multipliers and lecturers within the consortium to integrate the best practices into curricula and training programmes. The event, which took place in Budapest in 2023, was particularly noteworthy, as it facilitated close collaboration and the involvement of various stakeholders, including representatives from the construction industry and the Hungarian ministry. It supported targeted knowledge transfer by trainers, provided opportunities for reflecting on teaching methods, and promoted exchanges between universities and chambers of commerce, which improved teaching methodologies. The programme is available online free of charge.

*"I also consider the 'Train the Trainer' programme very important, as it trained educators and multipliers within our project consortium."*

*"My evaluation of this result is also high. I particularly rate this outcome highly because a variety of stakeholders participated in the 'Train the Trainer' programme."*

*"The participation was helpful. The chamber was represented by a trainer who also served as a multiplier."*

*"It is crucial to have trained personnel as educators who can pass on knowledge effectively."*

*"I found it very helpful to reflect on my own teaching at university and question how it translates into practice on the construction site, particularly for architects and engineers."*

### **c) Result: O3 Digital Additional Qualifications for the Construction and Finishing Trades**

Highly valued by project partners, this initiative includes practical modules such as office applications (Excel, Outlook) to improve communication and calculation, as well as CAD courses for design. Tests with small groups showed significant benefits, particularly for older employees and motivated participants who applied what they learned in their companies. The programme also supports Hungarian construction companies in digitalisation to align with Western European standards and is considered crucial for modernising training professions.

*"This was a curriculum and a modelled training programme to provide additional digital qualifications in the construction and finishing trades. It targets groups such as young people, especially those keen to learn at the end of their secondary school or vocational training in construction, as well as individuals from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)."*

*"The course tests with five to ten participants were helpful and created significant added value. Modules in the office sector, particularly Excel and Outlook, were tested to improve communication and calculations."*

*"This product provides valuable support in digitalisation, helping Hungarian construction companies reach Western European standards. That's why we visited various companies and introduced new techniques with our coach."*

*"This training programme is extremely important as it contributes to making vocational training more digital. That's why I actively participated in parts of it."*

### **d) Result: O4 Training Programme on Cooperation through Digitalisation**

The digital training focused on fostering collaboration throughout the construction process by enabling participants to integrate practical projects into their businesses, such as the introduction of communication or collaboration platforms. The goal was to improve efficiency and quality of cooperation in the construction sector, particularly for architects, engineers, and construction companies. Training sessions took place in Latvia, Poland, and Hungary and were positively evaluated by the partners, although

recruiting participants, particularly from SMEs, was challenging due to time constraints. Overall, the outcome was rated as good.

*“This was not just a training where knowledge was absorbed but also one where the learned content was directly applied in practice.”*

*“Definitely a good result with significant benefits for participants. The group of attendees was very well selected.”*

#### **e) Result: O5 Digital Training for the Construction and Finishing Trades**

The aim was to improve processes through close cooperation between architects, bricklayers, and companies in the construction and finishing trades. In addition to further training for businesses and professionals, this training should be incorporated into vocational training to better prepare apprentices for digital technologies and increase their motivation, as traditional paper plans are often perceived as outdated.

*“A key aspect of the project is the collaboration between different construction sectors, which we promote as the umbrella organisation IPOSZ. With around 20 nationwide industry associations, many in the construction sector, close coordination is essential.”*

*“To optimise processes, we initiated close cooperation between trades. A highlight was the large discussion round at the Hungarian construction fair Konstruma.”*

*“The outcome is very important. The aim is to make vocational training more digital, similar to university studies. Building Information Modelling (BIM) is being used to teach students how future planning will be done.”*

*“This digital knowledge should now also be integrated into training so that future tradespeople, such as bricklayers, tilers, or carpenters, can read digital plans. However, traditional A1 paper plans are still commonly used.”*

#### **f) Result: O6 Digital Entrepreneurship Education**

It is crucial for entrepreneurs to acquire digital skills. A particularly positive aspect of this training programme is its division into smaller modules adapted to national conditions. At the same time, the training aims to encourage young people to start businesses in the trades, addressing succession problems and a lack of interest in commercial activities. Digital tools such as BIM and work planning apps are integrated into the training programme to increase efficiency and reduce costs.

*“The digital entrepreneurship training is comprehensive, and the division of the programme into smaller modules is particularly positive.”*

*“A key concern is encouraging more young people to start and take over businesses, particularly in the trades. Currently, the younger generation lacks motivation for entrepreneurship.”*

### **3. Can you use the project results in your future work?**

The project results play a crucial role in strengthening vocational training in the construction and finishing trades and promoting collaboration between different stakeholders. The results are being further developed in innovation spaces such as the Craft

Lab, with a focus on CAD, 3D scanning, and 3D printing, while a digitalisation officer provides consulting support. The materials remain available online and are used in university teaching (Master's and Bachelor's programmes) as well as in entrepreneurial training. Digital transformation is advancing both in teaching and practice through new tools and more efficient processes.

*"The results have already been transferred to over 50 chambers of commerce and educational institutions, where they are actively used."*

*"A key component of the project was also the Craft Lab. An innovation space was created in the chamber, which is being further expanded and used for training."*

*"This collection of best practices remains available online at all times and is used by us. The collaboration initiated by this project will continue."*

*"The answer is definitely yes. We use the materials created in the project extensively. They are used in the Master's programme, and we also offer them to Bachelor's students."*

*"The digital transformation is influencing both university teaching and businesses. Many companies are already using the results. For example, a construction and building services provider has implemented the digital tools developed in the project."*

#### **4. How do you assess communication between project partners?**

##### **a) Did you communicate independently with other partners?**

Communication in the project was effective and well-coordinated, with a mix of online and in-person meetings, where face-to-face exchanges, such as the "Train-the-Trainer" event in Riga, were particularly valued. Regular updates kept partners informed without overwhelming them. A central, confidential data storage platform was set up on the website to standardise different storage systems among partners and reduce communication issues. Collaboration was mutual, with partners exchanging directly with both the lead partner and among themselves.

*"I found communication within the project to be well-coordinated. There were both online and in-person meetings, and I particularly valued face-to-face exchanges, such as the 'Train-the-Trainer' event in Riga in September."*

*"Efforts were made to keep partners regularly updated without overloading them. A confidential, central platform on the website was established to minimise such communication issues."*

*"Yes, since some of the training programmes were designed for mutual communication. This worked very well."*

##### **b) Was the lead partner's communication prompt, clear, and overall satisfactory?**

Project communication was smooth and efficient, particularly due to the long-standing cooperation with the lead partner, the Hanse-Parlament, which acted as a central hub. The partners were familiar with each other's working and communication styles, which facilitated coordination and led to joint solutions when challenges arose. There was no

noticeable friction among participants, and the project manager ensured timely and reliable information sharing, which was highly appreciated by all.

*“Yes, that was really the case. Since we have worked on many projects with the lead partner, we know how they communicate, and it was excellent.”*

*“We know how they work, and they know how we work – that makes collaboration easy.”*

*“Yes, I completely agree.”*

*“Yes, there was no friction. The main communication was through the lead partner, the Hanse-Parlament, which acted as a central hub.”*

*“We received all information from the project manager in a timely manner.”*

### **c) Do you have any suggestions for improving communication?**

Communication in the project faced minor challenges due to different preferences among partners regarding digital tools like Google Drive or OneDrive, which stemmed from national and institutional differences but were managed well.

*“In an ideal world, there would be a single system like OneDrive or Google Drive that all partners could use. In reality, however, some partners struggle with specific systems. It is only a minor challenge that needs to be handled.”*

*“We suggested some improvements mainly related to the use of digital tools for document creation and scheduling. These changes have already been implemented.”*

## **5. Semi-annual project workshops were conducted either in person or online to discuss tasks and project execution.**

### **a) Was this sufficient in your opinion? Were the time intervals between meetings appropriate?**

The meeting intervals were considered suitable and well-structured, with institutional meetings focusing on training implementation. The intervals were well chosen due to continuous interim communication and flexible organisation, allowing partners to stay updated through meeting records and individual consultations in case of scheduling conflicts. The organisation was rated excellent, as schedules and dates were clearly communicated during the kick-off meeting and adjusted flexibly when necessary, ensuring a comprehensive overview of all meetings.

*“In my experience, the intervals between meetings were appropriate, and each meeting had a clear objective. It made sense that these meetings took place within institutions.”*

*“The gaps between meetings were appropriate since there was continuous interim communication. Thanks to modern online communication, a quick and efficient exchange was always possible.”*

*“The organisation was really good, as all schedules and dates were explained in the first kick-off meeting.”*



*"It was very helpful to have an overall overview of the online and in-person meetings in advance. Overall, the organisation was excellent."*

*"Yes, they were absolutely sufficient."*

**b) The workshops were mostly half-day; do you see any need for changes? Should they be longer or shorter?**

The duration of the project meetings and workshops was considered appropriate. There were no unresolved questions, as any need for clarification was addressed promptly. Overall, there was no need for changes.

*"The meetings and workshops had an appropriate duration. Standard workshops usually lasted a full day or a maximum of half a day. The online workshops were scheduled for about four hours."*

*"I found a longer session necessary only for the Train-the-Trainer workshop, as short breaks between learning phases are important."*

*"From my perspective, there were no unresolved questions. If further clarification was needed, it was addressed promptly."*

*"If a broad topic requires us to produce something, a half-day is sufficient and does not need to be longer. Half a day would be the maximum, and sometimes we need even less time."*

*"No need for changes."*

**c) Is there sufficient time for communication and consultation on individual points during the project workshops?**

The discussion time in the project was generally sufficient, with online follow-ups mainly covering organisational aspects such as workshop planning. Overall, the time was considered appropriate. Challenges arose due to different perspectives.

*"In general, there was enough time for discussions. Sometimes online follow-ups were necessary, but these mainly concerned organisational matters."*

*"It was okay, but sometimes we needed more time for certain topics, which meant cutting time from other activities."*

*"In some cases, more time would have been helpful, but overall, it was fine."*

**d) Are all partners sufficiently involved in the work during the project workshops?**

The intercultural and international aspect of the project was seen as an advantage despite occasional challenges, as the diversity of perspectives from different countries introduced valuable new approaches. This benefit became particularly evident after in-person workshops. The workshops were interactive, featuring group work, brainstorming, and problem-solving activities, ensuring all partners were included. Everyone had equal opportunities to participate, supported by preparatory tasks introducing partners to one another so that no one was left out.

*"The intercultural or international aspect can sometimes be challenging but is seen as an advantage. The variety of perspectives and working methods from different countries bring valuable new approaches."*

*"Yes, everyone was involved, and no one was excluded. Often, there were preparatory tasks to introduce our own partners."*

*"During discussion sessions, everyone had the same chance to contribute."*

*"Absolutely, everyone had the opportunity."*

**e) Online workshops were also conducted. How do you evaluate the online meetings? Can online meetings replace face-to-face meetings? Do you have any suggestions for improving online meetings?**

Online meetings provide fewer opportunities for informal exchanges than face-to-face meetings, where breaks and conversations often foster valuable ideas and closer collaboration, even for future projects. However, online meetings are efficient for monitoring tasks and deadlines, while face-to-face meetings strengthen interpersonal connections that are irreplaceable in long-term projects. The balance of one to two in-person meetings per year alongside regular online workshops was considered successful, supported by meeting minutes. Improvements such as group work and tools like Padlet's enhanced the effectiveness of online sessions. Face-to-face meetings, like the visit to Schwerin, significantly strengthened collaboration through informal interactions.

*"Online meetings do not offer the same 'soft' communication time as face-to-face meetings. During a workshop, breaks allow participants to have informal conversations that can generate valuable information and ideas."*

*"The online meetings were good and could partially replace in-person events, particularly due to lower workload and time commitments. However, personal contact in a long-term project cannot be fully replaced."*

*"Both virtual and in-person workshops worked well. Online workshops can be organised more frequently, but face-to-face meetings are important for strengthening project collaboration."*

*"The online workshops were helpful, but the interpersonal exchange that took place during in-person meetings, such as over dinner or breakfast, was particularly valuable."*

**f) How do you assess the workshops overall (atmosphere, time, communication, participation of all project partners, structure, etc.)?**

The atmosphere was very positive, characterised by mutual respect despite cultural differences, supported by icebreaker sessions at the beginning. Technology and locations were appropriate, and the inclusion of site visits elevated communication to a new level, enriching collaboration and knowledge exchange. Overall, the workshops were rated highly.

*"In my opinion, the face-to-face workshops were conducted efficiently, combining information-sharing, group work, presentations of results, and discussions."*

*"An example was an excursion to the coal mines in Katowice to demonstrate the impact of vibrations on buildings. I found the atmosphere to be very good."*

*"There was always a good mix, everyone was involved, and the technology and locations were suitable for the conferences."*

**g) Do you have any suggestions for improving the workshops?**

The workshops were positively received, and no immediate improvements were suggested. However, it was proposed that each workshop should include an outstanding business example. While this had already been implemented in some cases, consistently incorporating such examples could enrich the workshops and provide new impulses.

*"No suggestions."*

*"Nothing for now."*

*"Perhaps we could invite an outstanding business example for all workshops. We have done this occasionally but not consistently."*

*"I think it would be beneficial to involve a business in every workshop – just a small suggestion."*

**6. The concepts, curricula, etc., developed in the project were created by individual project partners, shared with all partners for feedback, and intensively discussed in project workshops.**

**a) Were you able to sufficiently contribute your ideas to the development work?**

Partners had ample opportunities to actively contribute to the project, as regular updates allowed ideas and comments to be integrated at every stage without the need for direct intervention. Some partners who naturally provided suggestions and development ideas effectively utilised this capability, enhancing collaboration.

*"Yes, we could. There were always plenty of updates, so we could provide input at almost every stage of development."*

*"Yes, absolutely."*

*"Yes, we are the type of partner that usually contributes our own comments and development ideas. We are capable of doing so."*

**b) How could all partners be better and more intensively involved in the development work?**

The division of tasks and information flow in the project were well organised, ensuring that each partner knew their focus areas and communication remained efficient without unnecessary interference in others' domains. The collaboration was seen as successful, but it was suggested that partners be more involved in curriculum development.

*"In principle, it was sufficient since everyone knew their focus areas. The task distribution and information flow were well organised."*



*"No, I think we worked well."*

*"One possible approach could be to actively involve other partners in the process. For example, each partner could take responsibility for specific parts of the curriculum, allowing everyone to contribute their expertise."*

## 7. Dissemination of Project Results

**Dissemination of project results is very important. Below are a few questions regarding the dissemination of project outcomes.**

### **a) Have you conducted dissemination activities yourself?**

The project results were disseminated through various channels such as newsletters, social media, traditional media (e.g. television and magazines like Nordhandwerk), and blogs, including platforms like Instagram and TikTok. Measuring success is difficult; however, interest in the best practice catalogue and increased awareness of industry-relevant topics indicate a positive impact. Some partners relied on traditional media such as TV discussions, while others exceeded expectations with monthly blog posts. The perspective from higher education institutions proved particularly valuable, encouraging businesses to reflect on future developments and initiate changes.

*"The project results were presented on various platforms, including newsletters and social media. In the future, we plan to integrate additional channels like Instagram and TikTok."*

*"Success is hard to measure, but we reported on the project's progress in Nordhandwerk. After publication, we received around three to four enquiries via phone or email."*

*"We did much of the dissemination ourselves, as we are a rather traditional organisation. Instead of social media, we focused on traditional media like television."*

*"We are very active in disseminating information across all our projects. For instance, we run a blog where we regularly, about once a month, write about our project."*

*"The success of the project is difficult to measure, but it has encouraged discussion among stakeholders about important topics. The perspective from higher education institutions provided an additional motivational factor for businesses, making it particularly valuable."*

### **b) Do you believe that third parties (institutions that were not project partners) in your region/country will use the project results in the future? Please provide an estimate and briefly justify your response.**

The project results have been utilised by regional partners, particularly for training in the construction industry in regions like Schwerin and Rostock, where they have been incorporated into educational content. The materials are freely available and have also been provided to third parties, such as the Hungarian Ministry of Construction, with the hope of broader adoption by decision-makers. The impact is more significant in active project countries, while in Germany, networks such as working groups between trade and universities facilitate knowledge exchange. However, success depends on the availability of resources for practical implementation.

*“I can well imagine that the project results will also be used by third parties. For example, we have made the best practice collection available to the Hungarian Ministry of Construction.”*

*“Yes, I believe the materials are freely accessible. I am confident that vocational trainers will benefit from these materials.”*

*“The success of the project results has a greater impact in the active countries, especially since language barriers do not play a role there. In Germany, on the other hand, knowledge exchange is being initiated. However, the success of the project results depends on whether the necessary resources are made available to implement the findings.”*

## **8. A few final questions on project management, particularly the coordination and execution of the project.**

### **a) How do you rate the coordination and management by the lead partner? Scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good).**

Overall result: 5

All partners were consistently informed about the progress of the project and its direction. The lead partner was easily accessible through various channels, provided precise instructions, reminded participants of deadlines, and fostered active collaboration, which facilitated project management.

*“The online conferences organised by the Hanse Parliament, as well as the internal communication, were very well structured.”*

### **b) What was particularly good? What was particularly bad?**

The project brought together highly competent individuals and was smoothly and professionally led by the lead partner. The active involvement of the lead partner in discussions, through their own comments, was especially appreciated. Communication was consistently effective, with regular meetings, calls, and emails that covered not only project-specific topics but also insights into parallel projects, enhancing overall understanding and exchange.

*“They are truly experienced leaders, and everything went smoothly.”*

*“I particularly appreciate that the lead partner regularly contributed their own comments to discussions, which led to stimulating exchanges. In my opinion, that was excellent.”*

*“Communication with the lead partner was always very good. There were regular meetings, phone calls, and emails where not only project-specific topics were discussed, but also information about parallel projects was shared.”*

### **c) How do you assess the activity planning as a central management tool?**

The activity plan was considered extremely useful and necessary, as it was provided during the kick-off meeting and updated when changes occurred. Based on biannual meetings, it set clear timeframes for each activity, ensuring that all partners knew exactly when tasks needed to be completed. This allowed for pre-evaluation of topics and

focused discussions during meetings. Although strict deadlines occasionally caused frustration, they facilitated efficient processing and prevented unnecessarily long debates.

*“Very useful.”*

*“This is a really good tool because we already have the activity plan at the kick-off meeting, and it is updated accordingly when changes occur.”*

*“The activity plan, based on the biannual meetings, was a very helpful instrument for setting clear timeframes for each activity.”*

*“This ensured that all partners knew exactly when tasks had to be completed, allowing for pre-evaluation of topics and active discussions during meetings.”*

**d) Do you have any suggestions for improving project management?**

No further suggestions.

**e) How do you assess the bureaucratic effort involved in implementation, reporting, and project accounting?**

The bureaucratic effort was not perceived as particularly burdensome.

*“The effort was manageable as past experiences helped ensure everything ran smoothly.”*

**f) Which tasks were particularly bureaucratic and time-consuming?**

There were no major complaints.

*“Nothing particularly noteworthy.”*

**g) How could bureaucratic efforts be further reduced?**

One challenge is EU regulations on working hours, which limit daily working time to eight hours. In Finland, more flexible working hours (e.g. 7 or 10 hours) are common, making weekend work difficult to account for. Adjusting these regulations would be beneficial. Additionally, further digitalisation of time tracking was suggested to improve efficiency in allocating hours to project activities.

*“It is not a major burden, but an improvement would be if we did not have to use the online reporting system but could instead use our own system.”*

*“Another issue is the EU’s working time regulations. In Finland, we can work flexibly, but EU regulations limit working hours to a maximum of eight hours per day. This is a challenge caused by EU rules rather than the partners themselves. Adjusting the working time regulations would be helpful.”*

*“Timesheets could be made even more digital.”*

**h) Did the lead partner relieve you of administrative tasks? Or what support would you like from the lead partner?**

The lead partner provided clear instructions and standardised forms for time tracking and reporting, which were uniform across all partners and simplified the process. This system, also used in other projects with the same lead partner, proved efficient and effective.

*"I received all the information I needed, including the last one this morning. The communication in the project was very good."*

*"We received very clear instructions."*

*"The lead partner provided us with forms for time tracking and task reporting, which were uniform for all partners, simplifying the process."*

*"The system is similar in almost every project, as we work with the same lead partner in other projects, using the same system. It works very well."*

## **9 How do you generally assess the project?**

### **a) What was particularly good about the project and its implementation?**

The opportunity to engage in international exchanges was considered particularly valuable, as differences – for example, in comparison with Hungary – provided new perspectives. Furthermore, collaborating with micro-enterprises, as opposed to large corporations, broadened the horizon. The results are highly relevant for the member companies and can be implemented in their respective fields. Some partners, such as those from Finland, saw their role primarily in sharing advanced digital tools and explaining their use, which was regarded as a key contribution. The cooperation was based on trust and proved to be highly effective.

*"For us as a chamber, international engagement was particularly beneficial as it allowed us to see how things work in other countries and to recognise the differences."*

*"It was practical that we worked with micro-enterprises in the craft sector, while others were involved with large corporations. This helped to broaden our perspective."*

*"We found it very beneficial that our role primarily involved sharing advanced digital tools with our partners. In our view, this was the most important aspect."*

*"The collaboration was based on trust."*

### **b) What was less favourable and should be improved?**

For future projects, it is recommended to allocate interpreters for the main languages, as the exclusive use of English – especially among Polish partners – created language barriers that complicated communication. Another suggested improvement is the establishment of a separate budget for communication. However, overall, there were only a few points for improvement.

*"A recommendation for future implementation would be to plan for interpreters for the main languages next time. There were challenges, particularly with our Polish partners, where the language barrier was noticeable."*

*"A minor note: This project did not have a separate budget for communication. It would have been easier if one had been in place."*

**c) If you had to rate the project on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (very good), what score would you give?**

All participants rated the project with five points, except for one individual who awarded four points. This participant would have preferred a more detailed structure to optimise collaboration. The lower rating resulted from significant differences between partners, as universities operated on a different level compared to small businesses, making adaptation more challenging.

*"Overall, I would rate the project a 4. The lower rating is due to the fact that a more detailed approach might have been beneficial. University-based partners worked on a different level compared to small businesses, which may have made adaptation more difficult."*

**10. Do you have any further assessments, evaluations, comments, suggestions, etc., regarding the project and its implementation?**

The concepts for material evaluation and feedback collection, particularly the electronic recording with translation into various languages, were highlighted as very useful. This facilitated feedback collection even from partners with limited English proficiency.

*"There are not many aspects that need improvement, but we can further develop the concepts for material evaluation and feedback collection from this project in other on-going projects."*

*"We are very satisfied with the project and its outcomes, and we will further develop the materials and use them in future work."*

*"Many thanks for this great project!"*

### 5.36 Interviews with transfer partners

In separate projects with a limited number of project partners, the Hanse Parliament develop support measures for SMEs, e.g. vocational training, further training or consulting, promoting tools, Best Practices ect. After testing and evaluation, the developed and successfully tested products are transferred to 50 chambers and associations as well as to 20 colleges/universities from 13 countries, which were involved as transfer recipients and implementation partners in the DIG-CON project from the very beginning. Right from the start, the transfer partners were involved on a project-related basis; they gathered all the information, submitted their proposals and offers, which were continuously included in further work. The transfer partners as well as the transfer activities have already been discussed in written evaluations and also in interviews with the project partners.

The interviews with transfer partners that have received results and products of several projects of the Hanse-Parlament in recent years lasted between 20 and 30 minutes each. The interviews followed a generic set of questions but allowed also for free



conversation to hear the opinions of the interview partners. The results of the interviews can be summarised as follows.

### **How would you evaluate the approach of the centralized development and decentralized dissemination and use?**

The applied development and transfer model is very positively evaluated by the transfer recipients. The discussion partners especially emphasize that they are thoroughly involved in the performance of the project, they do not contain products which are strange to them but contain results in which development they have cooperated themselves and correspond to their requirements and regional conditions as much as possible.

a) How do you assess this approach of central development and decentralized distribution and use?

*I think it's very important, but throughout the whole process we have already been in contact with our local organizations and companies, so they know what we have been doing and they can utilize all the materials. What we do, when models are ready – we integrate this model into our universities.*

*I think this is a good approach. It's of course important that the partners are effectively involved in the project to achieve immediate results. I don't believe that results implementation may work by merely transferring them.*

*Maybe it is advisable to introduce additional subsequent transfer implementation projects, following proper implementation of a project, with specific assistance/guidance. Unfortunately, implementations and testing are no longer included in many support programmes, which, as I believe, is essential.*

*In Poland, there is no chamber membership requirement for companies. By dissemination of results and products, we are also able to reach out to new and innovative companies, thus shaping our own profile and reviving interest in chamber membership.*

*I think it's a very good approach. Thanks to chambers, the lead partner can meet the needs of e.g. SMEs, or it may target regions more effectively. At the same time, very good cooperation between the project partners and chambers/universities allows for effective dissemination of the project results.*

b) Has this approach proved successful?

*It is successful, because we know what our companies need. We are not transferring the whole packages but the parts that fit to the different companies. And that is a good way.*

c) Do you feel adequately informed about the projects and the outcomes, even if you are not involved as a project partner?

*Yes. It all depends on you. If you are active for yourself. It's available and you can get the information's you need.*

*Yes. We have access to very large documentation and sources. Both cover the online platforms containing all relevant results, as well as the readiness of the lead partner to put online all relevant content. They are pretty good at it.*

*Absolutely. We're regularly updated on the projects and their current state, while the Chamber receives information on upcoming events with our participation. The information is adequate.*

d) Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

*No. You cannot do much better. Even if you have the desire to implement something yourself, the lead partner would be ready to make and help you. It's just - as I said in the beginning - not a self-runner.*

*We have any suggestions for improvement. The cooperation works perfectly and it's always a pleasure to participate in projects and events. All partners are very satisfied.*

*I have no suggestions for improvement or what could be done better. Even if we wish to implement something on our own, the lead partner is immediately ready to establish contacts and to assist us.*

**As a member of the Hanse-Parlament, you will receive the completed products for promotion of SMEs.**

The interviewed transfer partners describe very vividly and lively how they use the transferred products and give examples thereto. It is remarkable that the transferred results are equally used by chambers as well as high schools and universities. As a specific challenge, it is emphasized that considering huge development gaps between the countries of the Baltic Sea Region the transfer recipients have undertaken targeted adjustments and modifications in order to correspond to the needs of their target groups and to achieve as much benefit as necessary during further utilization.

a) Do you look at these results/products and evaluate those for your own work?

*Yes. We look at them and utilize them according to the needs of our companies.*

*I also utilize the materials in my education courses. So, I can also do that one. Both for companies and individuals. So, the products are very useful in that sense. Those are the kind of materials that is not normally traced by Finnish companies.*

b) Are these project results interesting for your own work?

*Yes. We're monitoring all topics that are interesting to us.*

*Thanks to a very close cooperation with chambers and universities, many valuable solutions for results' transfer to our companies or even to individual persons can be obtained in the course of further training or during consultations.*

c) For what purposes of your own work do you use the results?

*Mostly, we take the results into account at branch meetings, where we can better reach our target group.*

*Educational courses, which we obtain from projects, are offered by the Chamber in our education establishments and they are also transferred to further education centres that are using them at their disposal.*

d) What improvements do you propose for the entire transfer process?

*It depends on how wide you want to spread. Because now we have mainly concentrated on our own area and of course through the university network we can spread into whole Finland, but I would say that our main task was to spread it in our local regional network. That is the best way to promote things for us.*

*We are regularly provided with up-to-date information from the Hanse Parliament about projects and products – this is a great success. My desire is to react faster and to initiate the implementation process.*

**Do you get all the help and support that you need for your own use of results/products?**

Once the opinions of the transfer partners have been obtained, the transfer and implementation process are perfectly organized, both for the chambers and for the universities. Transfer recipients receive all information, documents, instructions for use and help. They expressly stress that written and electronic transmission alone is not sufficient in any way; only personal exchange at conferences and workshops as well as individual advice are of decisive importance for the actual permanent use of the transferred products. Cooperation is an important part of many projects. In their assessments and evaluations, the interview partners refer to their many years of experience in various projects.

a) Do you feel well informed?

*Absolutely. We regularly receive information about the project and the status of the projects. The chamber also receives information about upcoming events in which we can also participate. The information is absolutely sufficient.*

*Yes, this works very well, the lead partner handles this issue very professionally.*

*The support works very well. Hanse Parliament is always ready to support us. The only sad thing is that the Chamber rarely receives feedback from companies that benefit from the results.*

b) Are the documents obtained sufficient? Are there any missing?

*Yes. They are sufficient. In case you need some further clarification, you can always contact the lead partner. But I think the documentation is good. And I also like all the so-called research books, which indicate the situation, for example with vocational education in different Baltic Sea countries, because you can learn from others.*

*Yes, very extensive and adequate.*

*The data provided are sufficient. The Hanse Parliament always provides us with assistance and offers. The Chamber is currently trying to introduce the occupation “building cleaner”. To this end, we have already received sufficient documents so that we can now establish this profession.*

c) Do you want comprehensive individual consultations for your own use and realization of the received promotion measures?

*We get along very well. Personal consultations are of immense importance to the transfer partners.*



*Cooperation is very strong. For instance, several projects were presented yesterday. Another barrier to implementing all necessary measures is the lack of sufficient chamber personnel.*

d) What additional assistance would you like?

*But on the contrary. We get regular information about projects and products from the Hanse Parliament. The desire would be rather than responded by the Chamber of Craft faster to the news and implementation would be initiated.*

*Basically none. We have been in projects long enough. I know pretty well how Hanse Parliament work. And everything goes smoothly. Maybe there is one thing: The partners should get the final application if you apply something. Of course, we get it when we have meetings, but for example concerning our administration and our university – they need this kind of documentation immediately.*

### **How can the project work be better suited to your needs?**

The transfer partners describe optimal cooperation processes. The development of project topics for which funding is applied for takes place jointly; all chambers, associations, colleges/universities/universities of applied sciences can present their wishes and suggestions in detail. The transfer recipients are involved in the implementation of the projects right from the start, the transfer process is exemplary and comprehensive and, according to the transfer recipients, leads to high utilization rates. Due to intensive inquiries, only one of the interviewees can make suggestions for improvement.

a) Do you have enough opportunity to contribute your needs, topics and tasks to the design of the projects?

*Yes, you definitely have it as a transfer partner. To be honest, as a transfer partner, we have not tried this so far, because we strive to be a project partner for the issues, we consider central.*

*Yes. If we want something extra, we can always propose. I would say that our intention is not steer the program towards our needs – it's better to steer the project according to the local needs of the Baltic countries. What we could do is to bring more case examples to these countries.*

b) The topics and tasks to be carried out in the projects are developed jointly at member meetings, acquisition workshops or hanseatic meetings. Are you able to contribute to your subjects and tasks adequately?

*Yes, we are. And we can always propose some new topics.*

c) How can the process of idea-making, the acquisition of projects and elaboration of funding proposals be improved?

*Collaboration usually goes so far that HP introduces various ideas to the Chambers of Crafts and thus offers the partnership in projects. So, the HP is the main initiator here and the Chamber would like to work on improving the collaboration after the board election.*

*We do a sort of workshop during the conferences. Or we could invite companies for morning coffees where you can discuss what kind of topics are raising. But basically, we know what the megatrends are.*

*Obviously, this is a very difficult matter, we're constantly keeping a close eye on the programmes. The lead partner is rendering an outstanding and highly important service for us – a service that we would hardly be able to carry out.*

*During development of the project proposals, the Hanse Parliament are doing the main work. As far as this issue is concerned, it might be helpful to get the partners more involved.*

*Usually, cooperation is structured in such way that the Hanse Parliament propose various ideas to craft chambers, thus inviting them to partnership in projects. In this way, these two organisations are the principal initiators. We as a chamber are currently working on seizing the initiative more proactively in the future.*

d) Do you feel sufficiently informed about the preparation and acquisition of projects?

*Yes, because we attend this kind general meetings – and all the workshops usually. And I find it a very nice thing that they combine different projects together at the same time – so there is a chance to discuss about other projects with other partners. I think that this kind of general conferences and workshops are the best places to raise some topics. And also, we can utilize the partners from other projects – if we are planning some kind of project in our country – which we have done within a couple of projects.*

*Yes. This is especially true for ongoing projects, when we learn of new activities in personal contacts. Networks are key in this regard.*

*Definitely yes. Sometimes there is almost too much information.*

e) Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

*Maybe some more time is needed. Workshops have only a few moments for some kind of brainstorm. I think you should have at least two hours for brainstorming sessions. So, just a little bit more time to have discussion with other partners. But otherwise, it has worked quite well.*

### **How do you assess fundamentally ...**

a) ... design and implementation of projects?

*The cooperation is excellent. Communication is a great strength and at a very high level. The way of planning is always very clear - the partners know exactly what they should deliver. Also, the type of billing is much easier compared to the projects in Poland. There it is very bureaucratic. The bureaucratic workload of the projects implemented by the Hanse Parliament is much more relaxed.*

*The coordinator does a pretty good job. Works well.*

*Project execution is rigorous. All partners agree on the activity plan, thus ensuring systematic and effective processing of the projects.*

*Goes smoothly – because the main coordinator regularly reminds you - and this kind of scheduling for coming events is very good. We now know what is going to happen in one year. So, it's easy for us to combine different projects together.*

b) ... broad transfer and use of results?

*For our country, it is good. Don't know about other countries. I always send our companies message when there is new material available. For their use when they need it.*

*Transfer and use of the results cover a very wide range, and they are well-processed. It is only up to the partners in each country what they'll make of it.*

*The manuals and results published in the book volume of the Baltic Sea Academy are highly popular in our region. The topics covered are very up-to-date and excellent. The Chamber's partner organisations also recommend many of these manuals to their peer organisations. These publications are particularly important!*

*The Hanse Parliament has contributed several articles, and it has participated in conferences in projects under the Chamber's umbrella. These publications are prepared by the Chamber for Poland, and they are sent to all state libraries across the country.*

**Do you have any further suggestions or wishes for future work?**

*No. I am very satisfied with the work. I like especially the fact that you can have a long-term cooperation with the same key personal. If people are changing all the time it doesn't work. I like this very tight cooperation. You know whom to contact if you need help.*

*The value of this kind of cooperation is that the key actors are there.*

### 5.37 Summary of evaluation results and recommendations

Various results demonstrate exemplary management, cooperation and implementation of the DIG-CON project. The control and information tools developed and used by the lead partner have proven to be particularly effective and are also used by individual partners for their own purposes, regardless of the project.

The broad transfer and implementation of the project results went very well. The transfer recipients were optimally involved in the project work, including a high level of re-use.

The project has succeeded in creating a good team spirit and turning the entire project consortium into a kind of learning organization and project implementation into a continuous learning process. The evaluation results were continuously incorporated into further project work so that continuous improvements could be achieved.

The remarkable project results are achieved due to the high commitment of all project partners and the excellent project management. The developed results are evaluated very positively by the project partners and the transfer partners and will continue to be implemented on a large scale within the scope of their service offer.

The management and work instructions developed and implemented by the lead partner, in particular activities planning, dissemination planning and forms for reporting and accounting have proven their worth. The lead partner carries out strict, strong project management, which is surprisingly appreciated by all partners. The lead partner takes on very extensive organizational and management tasks, relieves the project partners as much as possible so that they can focus on the content.

The cooperation within the consortium is assessed by all parties as constructive, target-oriented and harmonious. The exchange of information and communication is positive. The project and transfer partners spoke in written surveys and detailed personal interviews about very successful transfer and implementation processes, which are described as exemplary. The implementation of these activities with intensive personal exchange and individual implementation consulting is associated with very high costs, especially for the lead partner, in order to achieve broad regional dissemination and high implementation results.

The performed evaluation results as a summary lead to the following suggestions for improvements for the further project work and for the future performance of projects:

- A larger number of online meetings were held to maintain communication and information sharing. Online meetings have certainly proven their worth, but they can by no means replace face-to-face meetings. In future, regular face-to-face meetings will be supplemented by online meetings with the entire consortium at least twice a year. In addition, online meetings will be held with individual partners as needed.
- To further improve communication and cooperation, implementation of online meetings between the semi-annual project meetings. For face-to-face workshops every 6 months it is perfect. But it will be good to add online workshops in between like every 3 months to foster discussion and communication among the partners.
- Especially at the beginning of the project, more time for the lead partner to convey the extensive information on project implementation and, after the kick-off workshop, for all partners to be provided with a clear manual for processing all tasks.
- More time should be set aside in the face-to-face workshops for informal discussions and activities. This time is necessary to build networks with international partners, to build trust and to become creative together.
- In each workshop more time should be planned for brainstorming; individual partners would like two hours for this. The use of skype or other online tools for short meetings between the official workshops can also reduce the time needed for the biannual project meetings and further improve communication.
- Even better time management to ensure that all deadlines are met by all partners. Further strengthening requires the personal responsibility and initiative of the project partners during project implementation, e.g., meeting deadlines or carrying out separate tasks, e.g., sending reports in time.

- More opportunities should be created for individual partners to influence the developments of other work packages, i.e. those for which they are not responsible.
- The contact details provided by the lead partner for all project partners should be supplemented with brief profiles of the background, skills and professional interests of the individual partners and individuals. This would make it easier to match potential project partners with the project requirements.
- In the design of EU programs, strong financial incentives should be given for successful dissemination and implementation. Support for dissemination and implementation of project results could also be encouraged by providing 5 – 10 % of an approved budget for each funded project as an additional performance bonus in the event of a successful transfer/implementation.
- Individual partners raise concerns that the calls for proposals and the Commission's selection and funding criteria may limit the focus of projects on popular topics; potentially more innovative but not yet popular topics may be overlooked.
- The billing of personnel costs with fixed daily rates represents a significant reduction in bureaucracy. However, the EU Commission must review the amount of the daily rates. The current daily rates do not cover the actual personnel costs by far.
- The EU should review and redesign the system for accounting for personnel costs. Limitations on daily working hours (8 hours max) and no working hours on Saturdays and Sundays are no more valid since people work sometimes more than eight hours a day and/or during weekends. The classic working week (Monday to Friday) is somehow outdated. What is needed is more flexibility in working hours, which is reflected in timesheets.